



Testimony Before The House Health Policy Committee
In Opposition to HB 4446

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Representative Gaffney and members of the House Health Policy Committee, I appreciate your consideration of these written comments. MI NOW was formed in 1969 to take action in gaining social, economic, and political equality for women. There are more than 250,000 NOW members nationwide, and over 5,000 members in the state of Michigan.

I am here today to express our opposition to HB 4446, legislation which would amend the 24-hour waiting period requirement of the "Public health code" to require an ultrasound. The bill would also require that the physician ask the patient not once, but twice if she wants to view the ultrasound image: during the active ultrasound, and again when the image is printed. This would be 24 hours prior to the performance of an abortion.

MI NOW urges you to vote no on this bill for a number of reasons:

- 1) This bill is entirely redundant. Under the current law, 24 hours in advance, patients must be provided with a medically accurate "depiction, illustration, or photograph and description of a fetus at the gestational age nearest the gestation of the patient's pregnancy." Further, the physician or qualified health care person assisting the physician must orally describe in language to be understood by the patient, similar information about the gestational age of the fetus.
- 2) This bill creates a new barrier for women seeking abortions. Both of the steps I have just mentioned above, can be completed online or by phone. HB 4446 would dramatically change our state's current 24 hour informed consent law to require a costly overnight stay, potentially delaying the abortion itself. Eighty-one percent of Michigan counties have no abortion provider.
- 3) This bill is an unnecessary health care mandate. As many of you well know, members of this committee have in the past supported necessary health care mandates with documented, long term benefits of lowering the cost of health care and increasing life expectancy. For example mandatory mammograms, other cancer screenings and diabetes screening. I think committee members would define unnecessary health care benefits as those that ultimately drive up the cost

of health care with no cost savings elsewhere. And this bill is a perfect example of an unnecessary health care mandate .

4) Finally, if the intent of the bill is to ensure women seeking abortion have as much information as possible, then the bill should be amended to more strongly and with greater detail help women prevent a future unintended pregnancy. Please amend the bill to ensure that women seeking abortion are provided with detailed and comprehensive information on all FDA approved forms of contraception as well as information on where they can receive free or low cost birth control.

Thank you for your consideration of MI NOW's position. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time. You may also contact me at 517-256-5244 or through our governmental consultants at Capitol Services, Inc. at (517) 372-0860.